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REPORT ON A SURVEY OF DARDIC LANGUAGES OF KASHMIR

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Introduction

The research project on which I am reporting today was approved under the title of "A Comparative Study of Dardic Phonology." However, in the first few months of our work we realized that we had no reliable criteria for defining a Dardic language, or even for classifying Kashmiri and Shina together as Dardic languages. As we compared them feature by feature, it often seemed to us that if Shina was Dardic, then Kashmiri must be something else — or that if Kashmiri was Dardic, then perhaps Shina was closer to Pahari, and so on. Since the goal of our project was to make a systematic comparison of a group of supposedly closely related languages, this was a considerable obstacle.

After much debate we revised our project to include a survey of six languages traditionally classified as Dardic. Four of these languages are usually classified in one subgroup: Kashmiri, Kashtawari, Poguli and Siraji. Two are Indian dialects of Shina: the dialect of Dras, and the dialect of Tilel. The Indian Shina data was amplified by data, from other sources, for the Pakistani dialects of Gilgit and Indus Kohistan. Thus we had — or expected to find — four dialects of Kashmiri and four of Shina, with a fairly good geographical balance.

We also expanded our scope to include not merely phonology, but selected morphological and syntactic features as well. In particular, we took account of features or traits which have been considered by various scholars, including Grierson, Morgenstierne, Kachru and Fussman as typically Dardic. We hoped that at least some of these features would prove to be isoglosses. Ideally we hoped to show not only the isoglosses between Shina and Kashmiri, but also their traits in common. And although our research has raised new points of discussion, the overall picture has been clarified. Kashmiri and Shina have more features in common with each other than either has with other Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the region, such as Pahari or Punjabi. Furthermore, a study of core vocabularies shows that both these languages are Indo-Aryan, and not a mixture of Indo-Aryan and Iranian. We hope these results will lead to renewed discussion about the origins and development of the Dardic languages.

Methodology[1]

The Dardic languages are spoken over an area which extends approximately five hundred miles from east to west. It includes four major mountain ranges and has always been difficult of access. Today this area falls in three countries: India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of the research in India has been done by the British, or by Indians; and is published in English. A large part of the research done in the other countries was conducted by Europeans, and is published in French or German. Other works are available only in Urdu, Kashmiri, Russian etc.

Because of the sensitivity of the area and

organized as a team project. Dr Omkar N. Koul was the Indian research supervisor, I did the planning and implementation, and Vijay Kaul collected all the data. All of us participated in the analysis and interpretation. A number of scholars made their own data available to us, notably Dr Georg Buddruss of Germany, Dr N. Ramaswami of India, and Mr Md. Zarin of Pakistan.

Because our time was limited and our six languages were located at distant points, we designed a research instrument consisting of a word list and 57 sample sentences. The word list contains 280 core vocabulary items selected from various sources. The 57 sentences incorporate these core vocabulary items in different grammatical and syntactic frames, and we are grateful to Dr Franklin Southworth, who devised them.

The data for Siraji and Kashtawari was collected in Doda and Kishtawar. The data for Drasi was collected mainly in Dras. Speakers of Poguli, Kashmiri and Tileli were available in the Kashmir Valley. All the data was tape recorded by Vijay Kaul, transcribed in the field, and checked with the speakers. It was later also transcribed by myself or Dr Koul. In some cases the speakers were called back for more interviews. In general it was a time-consuming process to win their confidence and explain the purpose of the survey, and not less than a week was required to get a word list and sample sentences from one speaker, plus transcribe them. For each dialect, data was collected from at least two speakers.

Dardic Features

Six phonological features have been most frequently cited as characteristic of Dardic languages. There are:

companion feature consists of palatalization of word-final consonants.

2. Assimilation of vowels across syllable boundaries, also called "epenthetic vowel change." A companion feature is the development of unrounded back vowels.

Ex. la:mUTi, 'tail' (Kohis'tyoM)

fotu:i'tye, 'elbows' (Tileli: fotu:ti, 'an elbow')

kun', 'alone (f. sg.)' (Kashmiri: kun, 'alone m.sg.')

mA:l', 'fathers' (Kashmiri: mo:l, 'father')

3. Retention of OIA consonant clusters. These were mainly initial clusters of stop + r (Cr) and final ones of sibilant plus stop. We did not concern ourselves with medial clusters.

Ex. Shina: krom~kom, diST, aST

Kashmiri: tru:vah, kruhun

4. Distinction between three sibilants: s, S', and S.

5. Loss of aspiration of voiced stops:

Ex. Kashmiri: gur, bo:y, dOAd

Shina: Za:, aZu (< abhra-), dut (< dugdha-), du:m

6. Development of contrastive tones. It is too early to tell whether this is associated with loss of aspiration as mentioned in (5).

There are three morphological features;

7. Pronoun systems characterized by the following semantic distinctions (in at least three-term sets): plus or minus near, and plus or minus visible.

8. Nominal systems characterised by case markers in an inflectional system of more than binary complexity—as opposed to the

companion feature is the occurrence of agent case markers.

9. Postpositions of the Dardic type occurring in combination with the case markers mentioned in (8).

Ex. Shina: -maji, go:Zemaji; sa:eti, tuse-sa:eti

Kashmiri: maMz, garas maMz; sI:t', tse-sI:t'

There are two syntactic features:

10. Occurrence of SVO or SOV word order in sentences.

11. Agreement in past tense transitive sentences between semantic subject and verb, as opposed to agreement between object and verb.

Vocabulary

We counted the shared vocabulary items in a basic word list of 126 items, selected from the 167 items in Gérard Fussman's *Atlas of Dardic and Kafir Languages.* For this purpose we distinguished between first order cognates and second order cognates. First order cognates have both a common origin and a similar phonological development:

Kashmiri: pu:tIr < Skt. pautri:- 'granddaughter'

Shina: po:Ci < Skt. pautri:-

Second order cognates have a dissimilar phonological development:

Shina aka:^i < Skt. eka:daS'a 'eleven'

Hindi: gya:ra: < Skt. eka:daS'a

It is easy to quibble about definitions: for example, what is the difference between a case ending and a postposition in a particular dialect? Is a particular final -i' palatalization or a devoiced vowel? When there is more

of these features is fairly clear cut, and we feel that further work on sound correspondences and reconstruction would tend to confirm our conclusions.

Features Common to Kashmiri and Shina

Six features were found to be common to all or nearly all the dialects studied:

1. Assimilation of vowels across syllable boundaries. This occurs in all the dialects; however, it occurs less frequently in Siraji, Gilgiti and Drasi. The companion feature, development of back unrounded vowels, occurs in every dialect except Gilgiti. Phonemically, Kashmiri has a series of centralized vowels, written /I, A/. Phonetically they seem to be further back, but unrounded. /U, E/ occur in all the Shina dialects except Gilgiti, but do not usually have phonemic status. [wEi], 'water'.

2. Retention of OIA consonant clusters in the initial position characterizes all the dialects spoken in India, both Shina and Kashmiri. However, this feature is becoming obsolete in Tileli. The Shina dialects of Pakistan appear to have lost these clusters recently.

3. Loss of aspiration of voiced stops characterizes Kashmiri, Kashtawari and all the Shina dialects. But Poguli and Siraji retain the aspirates even in tadbhavas. /dhil/, 'bark of tree'.

4. All the languages have pronoun systems distinguishing plus or minus near and plus or minus visible. In Siraji, Poguli, Kashtawari and Kashmiri these oppositions are contained in three term sets (Kashmiri *yi*, 'this, he, it'; *hu*, 'that, he, it' and *su* 'that, he, it (invisible)'). In the Shina dialects the sets contain four or more terms. Shina dia-

plus or minus visible. Tileli has an additional dimension: inclusive versus exclusive.

5. The nominal systems of all the languages show well-developed inflectional systems, including markers for the agent case. However, agreement in past tense sentences is invariably between the semantic subject and the verb.

6. All the languages possess postpositions of the Dardic type, which are added to inflected nouns.

Features Separating Kashmiri and Shina

Six features separate Kashmiri and Shina. The first three may also be considered isoglosses between Kashmiri and other IA languages.

1. Palatalization of consonants occurs in Siraji, Poguli, Kashmiri and Kashtawari, though in Kashtawari it does not seem to have a high functional load. Kashtawari could be more conveniently analyzed as having shortening of word-final vowels. Palatalization does not occur in any of the Shina dialects.

2. Kashmiri, Poguli and Kashtawari have developed a centralized vowel series. On the phonological level they also have instances of back unrounded vowels. No Shina dialect has developed a centralized vowel series.

3. SVO word order occurs only in Kashmiri and Kashtawari.

4. Retention of OIA consonant clusters in final (as opposed to initial or medial) position occurs only in Shina (Drasi and Tileli).

5. All the Shina dialects preserve the ancient three way contrast among sibilants, which has been lost in the other dialects.

6. The development of contrastive tones

Shared Vocabulary

The results of the core vocabulary count fill out the patterns described above. Gilgiti Shina shares 80% of its vocabulary with Kohistani, 81% with Tileli, and 85% with Drasi. (Gilgiti and Drasi also share similarities in the pronominal and verbal systems, which lends support to the Drasis' claim of a Gilgiti origin.) The vocabulary shared by the Shina dialects consists almost entirely of first order cognates.

Kashmiri shares 50% of its vocabulary with Gilgiti Shina, mostly first order cognates. It shares 63% with Siraji, of which 29% are second order cognates — that is, words that both Siraji and Kashmiri share with other Indo-Aryan languages. It shares 70% with Poguli and 80% with Kashtawari, mostly first order cognates.

The vocabulary count tends to place the Shina dialects in one group and Kashmiri, Kashtawari and Poguli in another. There are other isoglosses between Siraji and Poguli on one hand, and Kashmiri/Kashtawari on the other — notably the retention of voiced aspirates in the former. Siraji, as Grierson already notes, is very hard to classify. We do not consider it a dialect of Kashmiri. Possibly it is a creole. It would be useful to make a systematic comparison of Siraji with Pahari dialects.

Finally, I did a count of the vocabulary items in Fussman's *Atlas*, which provides derivations, in order to find out what percentage of Kashmiri and what percentage of Shina words are of Sanskritic origin. The results show 72% of Kashmiri words and 78% of Shina words are of Sanskritic origin. However, a substantial portion of these

Kashmiri: gur < Sanskrit ghoTaka, 'horse'

Shina: aS'po < Sanskrit aS'va, 'horse'

A systematic study of these lexical variations might provide clues to the origins of both languages.

Conclusions

Kashmiri and Shina share approximately half their vocabulary along with other phonological and morphological features traditionally considered "Dardic". On an equal number of other points, they may be distinguished from each other. The most important differences are phonological: the emergence of tone systems in Shina, the development of palatalization and centralized vowels in Kashmiri, the retention of the three way contrast in sibilants in Shina.

Kashmiri is unique among IA languages in having SVO word order. Its vowel system and its palatalized consonants also place it in a unique position among Indian languages. These features deserve further study to see whether they may be derived from OIA sources, or whether they must be searched for in some unknown substratum.

Kashmiri does not show the homogeneity of Shina, unless the group is considered to consist only of Kashmiri and Kashtawari. Another way of saying this is that there has been more convergence among languages spoken in the vicinity of the Kashmir Valley, than among Shina and its neighbours.

Siraji cannot be considered a dialect of Kashmiri in the strict sense. Unless it can be classed along with Western Pahari, it is probably a creole.

And lastly, the Dardic features described above do not for the most part characterize Pahari or IA languages of the plains. Dr Shackle has pointed out some points of agreement between Northern Lahnda (Hindko) dialects and the Dardic languages; these are probably accounted for by the archaic nature of both. The *patterning* of the features, as described here, is unique to Shina and Kashmiri; and until further work is done, may be considered to define this subgroup of the Dardic languages.

NOTE

1. [The editor has imposed an easy-to-print transcription. Printed I corresponds to the barred i of the manuscript; U stands for an upside-down m; A for Schwa; E for a small gamma; i' for a semi-vowel; O for open o; T S Z C for dotted t s z c; S' for an s with an acute in Sanskrit and for s with a hook elsewhere; M for a nasal tilde; colon for macron.]

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